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ABSTRACT

This document gives brief answers to questions that are frequently asked about refugee resettlement and asylum. The topics covered include the following: the differences between refugees and asylees; how refugee admission numbers and allocations are determined; how refugees are selected; the application processing procedure, including changes due to the Federal Refugee Act of 1980; how actual admissions and proposed numbers compare; Federal aid available to refugees; Federal agencies responsible for implementing the refugee program; the role of private agencies in resettlement; the role of States in administering the refugee program; refugee welfare dependency rates; placement policy goals; geographical distribution of refugees, how this distribution compares with that of other populations, and what issues this comparison raises; and program costs. (CMG)

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BRIEF ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND ASYLUM

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June, 1983

What are the differences between refugees and asylees?

ISSUE	REFUGEES	ASYLEES
Definition	Any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. In special circumstances as the President after appropriate consultation may specify, any person who is within the country of such person's nationality, and who is persecuted or who has a well-founded fear of persecution on the above grounds, may be considered a refugee.	Same
Admissions Numbers and Allocations	The number of refugees who may be admitted under this section in any fiscal year after fiscal year 1982 shall be such number as the President determines, before the beginning of the fiscal year and after appropriate consultation, is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest. If the President determines, after appropriate consultation, that (1) an unforeseen emergency refugee situation exists, (2) the admission of certain refugees in response to the emergency refugee situation is justified by grave humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest, and (3) the admission to the United States of these refugees cannot be accomplished, the President may fix a number of refugees to be admitted to the United States during the succeeding period (not to exceed twelve months) in response to the emergency refugee situation and such admissions shall be allocated among refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States in accordance with a determination made by the President after appropriate consultation.	No predetermined admissions number or allocations. No more than 5000 asylees may adjust status to permanent resident alien per year.
Selection Criteria	Refugees who are of special humanitarian concern to the U.S. are admissible, up to the number established during the Consultations. Special humanitarian concern is generally defined by the refugee's attachment to this country--through previous employment, family ties, etc.	Self-selected--asylum applicants present themselves or request asylum during exclusion or deportation hearings; valid claims cannot be denied on the basis of numbers, allocations or other selection criteria.

ISSUES	REFUGEES	ASYLEES
Processing	Done outside the U.S.: Voluntary agencies prescreen applicants, to determine if they fit into one of the priority categories established by the State Department; INS interviews applicants to determine if they meet the refugee definition and are otherwise admissible to the U.S.; approved applicants are assigned to sponsors; they are given a medical screening; and transportation is arranged through the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration.	Done inside the U.S.: Asylum applications can be submitted to an INS District Director and/or to an Immigration Judge during an exclusion or deportation hearing. During the period of application, the asylum seeker may be detained. If the applicant is not detained, he or she may receive work authorization, at the discretion of the District Director. The decision regarding the asylum claim is made by the District Director or Immigration Judge, depending upon where the application was made.
Appeals	There is no formal appeal process. Administrative reviews of applications may take place, but these are discretionary and are conducted by the same agency that made the initial determination.	If a District Director rejects an asylum application, it can be renewed at the time of exclusion or deportation hearings. If it is again rejected, the claim can be appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals and from there to U.S. federal courts.
Permanence of Status	May adjust status to permanent resident alien after one year; thereafter, eligible for naturalization.	Asylum may be terminated if the Attorney General, pursuant to such regulation as the Attorney General may prescribe, determines that the alien is no longer a refugee, owing to a change in circumstances in the alien's country of nationality or, in the case of an alien having no nationality, in the country in which the alien last habitually resided. Not more than five thousand of the refugee admission authorized under section 207(a) in any fiscal year may be made available by the Attorney General, in the Attorney General's discretion and under such regulations as the Attorney General may prescribe, to adjust to the status of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence the status of any alien granted asylum.

ISSUES	REFUGEES	ASYLEES
Eligibility for Benefits under Refugee Act	Refugees are eligible for cash and medical assistance (with a waiver of family composition requirements for 18 months) and social services. (See memo # , for more details)	Same. (Asylum applicants are not eligible for any special benefits accorded to refugees.)
	Refugees may petition for the admission of their relatives.	Same. (Asylum applicants cannot exercise this right until their claims are approved.)

How are refugee admissions numbers determined under the Refugee Act of 1980?

Refugee admissions numbers are determined by the President, in consultation with the Judiciary Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate. According to the Refugee Act, "the number of refugees who may be admitted . . . in any fiscal year after fiscal year 1982 shall be such number as the President determines, before the beginning of the fiscal year and after appropriate consultation, is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest." (Prior to 1983, 50,000 refugees could be admitted per year without consultation; since more than that number were admitted in each year between passage of the bill and 1983, consultations were held.) In addition, if the President determines, after appropriate consultation, that the admission of certain refugees is justified, in response to an emergency situation, numbers may be set to permit such admissions, even if it means an increase in overall refugee admissions.

How are refugee allocations set under the Refugee Act of 1980?

During the course of consultations, the President also indicates the anticipated allocation of refugee admissions during the fiscal year. Country reports are provided to the Congress, in which the State Department outlines the need for resettlement among various refugee groups throughout the world and proposes ceilings by geographic area. The Refugee Act provides that the designated representatives of the President hold periodic discussions with member of the Judiciary Committees regarding changes in the worldwide refugee situation, the progress of refugee admissions and the possible need for adjustments in the allocation of admissions among refugee groups and/or regions.

What information is placed into the record during the consultations on refugee admissions numbers and allocations?

In addition to the country reports that specify the nature of refugee situations worldwide and the need for resettlement, the following information is required by law:

- A description of the proposed plans for the movement of refugees and their resettlement and the estimated costs of accomplishing these efforts;
- An analysis of the anticipated social, economic and demographic impact of their admission to the U.S.;
- A description of the extent to which other countries will admit and assist in the resettlement of such refugees; and
- An analysis of the impact of the participation of the U.S. in the resettlement of such refugees on the foreign policy interests of the U.S.

Unless public disclosure of specific details would jeopardize the lives or security of individuals, public hearings are held to review the proposal for refugee admissions and allocations. At these hearings, public interest groups testify regarding the need for resettlement numbers and allocations and the impact of refugees.

How are refugees selected for admission to the United States?

All refugees are not eligible for admission to the United States. To be admitted, an individual must meet all of the following criteria:

- The applicant must meet the definition of a refugee contained in the Refugee Act of 1980;
- He or she must be among the refugees determined, during the consultation process, to be of special humanitarian concern to the U.S.;
- He or she must be admissible under United States law, i.e., is not excludable, as the grounds for exclusion are defined in the Immigration and Nationalities Act;
- He or she must not be firmly resettled in any foreign country.

Since there are more persons worldwide who meet these criteria than there are resettlement places within the U.S., applicants must also meet certain processing priorities. The priorities are as follows:

1. Compelling Concern/Interest: exceptional cases (a) of refugees in immediate danger of loss of life and for whom there appears to be no alternative to resettlement in the U.S., or (b) of refugees of compelling concern to the U.S., such as former or present political prisoners and dissidents.

2. Former U.S. government Employees: refugees employed by the U.S. Government for at least one year prior to the claim for refugee status. This category also includes persons who were not official U.S. government employees, but who for at least one year were so integrated into U.S. government offices as to have been in effect and appearance U.S. government employees.

3. Family Reunification: refugees who are spouses, sons, daughters, parents, grandparents, unmarried siblings or unmarried minor grandchildren of persons in the U.S., if the U.S. relative is a U.S. citizen, lawful permanent resident alien, refugee or asylee.

4. Other Ties to the United States: (a) refugees employed by U.S. foundations, U.S. voluntary agencies or U.S. business firms for at least one year prior to the claim for refugee status; and (b) refugees trained in the U.S. or abroad under U.S. auspices.

5. Additional Family Reunification: refugees who are married siblings, unmarried grandchildren who have reached their majority, or married grandchildren of persons in the U.S.; also more distantly related individuals who are part of the family group and dependent on the family for support.

6. Otherwise of National Interest: other refugees in specified regional groups whose admission is in the national interest.

In certain parts of the world, refugees in some priorities may not be processed for admission to the United States. For example, within the Middle East, only priorities one through four are currently being processed.

What are the procedures through which refugee applications are processed?

Refugee processing varies from area to area, depending on the presence or absence of permanent State Department and/or Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) staff and the extent to which the refugees in a given location have been designated, through the consultation process, to be of special humanitarian concern to the U.S. Persons in these designated groups (e.g., Southeast Asians, Afghans, Ethiopians in the Sudan, Soviet Jews, Poles, etc.) are prescreened by U.S. voluntary agency staff, under contract to the State Department, to determine if they are eligible for resettlement to the United States. In some areas, these voluntary agency staff do the prescreening in refugee camps operated by the UNHCR, while in others, they operate out of U.S. embassies or their own resettlement offices. Following State Department review of the files prepared in the prescreening, the applications are presented to INS officers who interview each applicant to determine whether the individual meets the definition of a refugee and is admissible under U.S. law. If INS approval is obtained, the file on the applicant is sent to the American Council of Voluntary Agencies (ACVA) Migration and Refugee Affairs Committee for assurances that the refugee will be sponsored by one of the private agencies (or states designated as agencies for this purpose). After sponsorship assurances are received, the refugee is given a medical screening, by the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) or a local physician approved by the U.S. embassy. These screenings are performed using standards approved by the Centers for Disease Control of the U.S. Public Health Service. (For Southeast Asians and Ethiopians in the Sudan, the latter parts of this approval process occur while the refugee is receiving intensive English language training and cultural orientation.) Finally, transportation arrangements are made, through ICM, and the refugee procedes to the U.S.

Refugee applications may be made by individuals who do not belong to a group designated as being of special humanitarian concern to the U.S., but they will not be reviewed until the approval of the Bureau of Refugee Programs is obtained. If these applicants are in an area without an INS overseas office, they must wait for an INS circuit rider to come or they must make their own way to an INS officer so that a review of their admissibility can be made.

If an application for refugee resettlement is refused, either at the State Department level or by an INS officer, a request can be made that the application be reviewed. This process does not constitute an appeal, however, since the review is conducted by the same agency that made the initial determination,

What, if any, changes in processing have taken place pursuant to passage of the Refugee Act?

The major change that has taken place, in refugee resettlement processing, pertains to group presumption versus individual burden of proof. Prior to passage of the Refugee Act, large-scale refugee admissions were accomplished through use of the Attorney General's parole authority. Generally, if a decision were made that the U.S. should accept refugees of a certain nationality or located in a certain area, there was a strong presumption that all members of that nationality group or all persons located in that place (generally a refugee camp) were refugees. Barring ineligibility on one of the grounds of exclusion--and if they fit one of the U.S. priorities--these persons were virtually assured admission under the parole authority. The review given to these applications by the INS was ususally cursory, except as it pertained to exclusionary grounds.

Since passage of the Refugee Act, the INS has redefined its responsibilities regarding refugee admissions. Now, INS officers scrutinize individual cases for compliance with the definition of a refugee contained in the Refugee Act. They attempt to ascertain motivations for flights, requiring documentation from individuals that they, as individuals, have a well-founded fear of persecution if they were to return to their homelands. No longer do INS officers presume that applicants meet the definition of a refugee on the basis of their nationality or presence in a refugee camp, even if the consultation process has determined that members of the nationality within that location are of special humanitarian concern to the U.S.

Proponents of this change in processing state that individual case-by-case reviews of refugee status are required by the Refugee Act. Others argue, however, that such reviews limit the capacity of the U.S. to respond effectively in providing humantarian relief under certain circumstances and in upholding our commitments to countries of first asylum, by limiting our ability to ensure that we will resettle a given number of person within a particular time period. It is by no means clear that the Refugee Act prohibits the INS from making presumptions in favor of members of certain groups, particularly when these groups fall within the consultation definition of special humanitarian concern. Nor do critics of present practices believe that the Refugee Act necessarily requires that INS process each application overseas; they note that the legislative history indicates that in the Senate, at least, an explicit statement was made by the floor manager of the bill, Senator Kennedy, that depending on the circumstances it would be appropriate for State Department officials to complete the entire overseas processing and grant refugee status to individual applicants.

What effect has the consultation process had on the admissions system?

The consultation process had led to increased Congressional input into the decision-making process regarding refugee admissions. In both 1982 and 1983, the proposed ceiling for refugee admissions was reduced following consultation. For Fiscal Year 1982, the President initially proposed that 173,000 refugees be admitted; following consultations that number was reduced to a ceiling of 140,000. For Fiscal Year 1983, the President initially proposed that 98,000 refugees be admitted; following consultations that number was reduced to a ceiling of 90,000.

How have actual admissions compared with the proposed numbers?

Actual admissions proved to be lower than the proposed numbers in each of the past few years. In FY1 981, the ceiling was set at 217,000 and 159,000 arrived. In FY 1982, the ceiling was 140,000, and actual arrivals were 97,297. In FY 1983, admissions are running well below the ceiling of 90,000.

During the consultations debates, the point has been made that the proposed numbers are understood to be ceilings and not goals. The administration has stated that to the extent possible--consistent with needs and objectives--the program will be managed to admit fewer than the authorized ceiling.

Some questions have been raised as to this approach. Some observers have noted that the consultation number is, or should be, an estimate of actual need that is likely to be filled. They point out that a realistic assessment of need, and a U.S. commitment to meet this need, would facilitate planning, since service deliverers could better estimate likely numbers of arrivals who would be seeking services. Also, countries of first asylum would have a better picture of the number of refugees who are likely to be resettled from these countries. Some first asylum nations--Thailand, in particular--have complained that countries of resettlement, including the U.S., have not lived up to their commitments regarding the movement of refugees out of their territories. The gap between proposed and actual admissions exacerbates these tensions.

What federally-funded assistance and services are available to refugees through the U.S. refugee program?

Under current regulations and program guidelines, the following assistance and services are available to refugees:

Reception and Placement Grants--grants are provided to voluntary resettlement agencies, on the basis of a cooperative agreement, to support pre-arrival activities (identification of sponsors, orientation of sponsors, travel arrangements to bring refugees to their final destination); reception (assistance in obtaining initial housing, furnishings, food and clothing); and orientation and referral services in the areas of health, employment and training.

Cash Assistance--Refugees who are categorically eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or Supplementary Security Income (SSI) may receive such assistance, with full federal reimbursement of all state costs during the refugee's first 36 months in the U.S.

Refugees who meet income eligibility requirements but not family composition requirements for AFDC may receive Refugee Cash Assistance during their first 18 months in the U.S., with full federal reimbursement of all state costs.

Medical Assistance--Refugees who are categorically eligible for Medicaid may receive such assistance, with full federal reimbursement of all state costs during the refugee's first 36 months in the U.S.

Refugees who meet income eligibility requirement but not family composition requirements for Medicaid may receive Refugee Medical Assistance during their first 18 months in the U.S., with full federal reimbursement of all state costs.

General Assistance--If a state or county has a general assistance program for other needy residents, a refugee may be served under that program, with full federal reimbursement during the refugee's 19th to 36 month in the U.S.

Matching Grants--Voluntary agencies are provided funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis (up to $1,000 match) to provide services (cash and medical assistance, language training, job counseling, job development and placement, etc.) to non-Indochinese refugees.

Social Services--States receive funds, based on the number of refugees resident in the state who have been in the U.S. for 36 months or less, to support a range of services, including employment services, English-as-Second Language programs, health-related services, translator and interpreter services,

and social adjustment services. Priority is given to employment and language services that promote economic self-sufficiency.

Targeted Assistance--"Impacted Areas" (localities with high concentrations of welfare-dependent refugees) receive funds to support services to promote economic self-sufficiency in dependent refugees.

Transitional Assistance to Refugee Children--Under this program, funds are provided to States for educational services for refugee children.

Health Program for Refugees--Administered through the Center for Disease Control, this program awards grants to states and localities to identify health problems that might impede effective resettlement of refugees and refer refugees for appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

Intensive English-as-a-Second Language and Cultural Orientation in Overseas Camps--Administered by the Bureau of Refugee Programs, this program provides intensive language training and cultural orientation to U.S.-bound refugees in the Refugee Processing Centers in Bataan and Galang (for Indochinese refugees) and the Sudan (for Ethiopian refugees.)

Which federal agencies are responsible for implementation of the U.S. refugee program?

Four agencies have primary responsibility for the operation of the U.S. refugee program:

The Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs is the principal policy coordination mechanism within the U.S. government. It is a non-operational office, whose function is to encourage coordination between the public and private sector agencies concerned with refugees, and between various levels of government. The Coordinator is based in the State Department, and, with regard to his international responsibilities, has Ambassadorial status.

The Bureau of Refugee Programs administers the State Department's refugee programs. It is responsible for the development and implementation of policies related to refugee relief and assistance overseas and U.S. contributuons to international refugee organizations. It is also responsible for setting priorities for admission of refugees to the United States and providing resources for their processing and training overseas, reception and placement in U.S. communities. These last activities are performed through cooperative agreements and contracts with voluntary agencies. Approximately 35 percent of the Bureau's 1982 budget was expended in activities related to the admission of refugees to the U.S., with the remainder supporting international efforts.

The Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is charged with chief operational responsibility for the domestic assistance program; domestic assistance policy making and regulatory responsibility is invested in the Secretary of DHHS in consultation with the U.S. Coordinator. ORR funds and monitors a range of programs, most of which are administered by state governments--cash assistance, medical assistance, social services and targeted assistance, for example. In addition, DHHS is responsible for public health-related services and provides matching grants to private agencies that serve non-Indochinese refugees.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) adjudicates asylum claims and processes refugees for admission to the United States, determining if an individual meets the statutory definition of a refugee. The Refugee Act gave responsibility to the Attorney General to develop procedures for making these determinations.

In addition to these principal agencies are several others that implement refugee programs;

The Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs in the Department of Education administers the Transition Program for Refugee Children, under an interagency agreement with DHHS.

The Office of Refugee Health in the Public Health Service, DHHS coordinates the activities of those PHS agencies involved in refugee health programs, the major one of which is the Center for Disease Control which is responsible for the medical screening of refugees and administration of the domestic health assessment program.

The Community Relation Agency in the Justice Department addresses concerns related to community tensions involving refugees.

What private agencies are involved in resettling refugees?

The groups that took the earliest, and have maintained the most consistent interest in resettling refugees have been the voluntary resettlement agencies, often called VOLAGS. As early as 1880, religious and secular associations began to assist refugees coming to the United States. The voluntary agencies have participated in the resettlement activities accompanying every major refugee flow to the United States. The following agencies are currently involved in the resettlement program:

American Council for Nationalities Service (ACNS), resettled 7,625 refugees from 9 countries in 1982
American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, Inc., resettled 2,468 refugees from 6 countries in 1982

Church World Service, resettled 8,432 refugees from 18 countries in 1982
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, resettled 3,650 refugees from 5 regions or countries in 1982
International Rescue Committee, Inc., resettled 10,207 refugees from 11 countries in 1982
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, resettled 7,365 refugees from 7 countries or regions in 1982
The Polish American Immigration and Relief Committee, Inc., resettled 631 refugees in 1982
The Presideing Bishop's Fund for World Relief, resettled 1,355 refugees from 13 countries
Rav Tov, resettled
Tolstoy Foundation, resettled 3,615 refugees from 11 countries
United States Catholic Conference, resettled 45,636 refugees
World Relief, resettled 6,506 refugees

Voluntary agency operational activities are numerous. They participate in overseas relief activities; they assist the government in processing refugees for admission to the United States; they arrange for sponsorships and placement of refugees in U.S. locations; they receive refugees at their places of resettlement; they offer a range of services through their own resources, reception and placement grants, matching grants and/or state administered social service contracts; and they provide cash assistance to new arrivals.

What are the advantages of using voluntary agencies for resettlement purposes?

A recent report on the voluntary agencies outlined their contributions to the resettlement effort:

- The volags are there and likely to stay, providing capacities and continuity lacking in public agencies
- They are more flexible in size and in function than units of government.
- They bring private resources to bear, as government agencies cannot.
- They attract, and keep, dedicated staff people.
- They avoid a potential bias towards welfare, which might be found in the human resources agencies.
- They are knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, ethnic differences and the special problems of refugees.

What is the role of state government in administering refugee programs?

The Refugee Act of 1980 provides explicit support for the involvement of state governments in the administration of the refugee program. The

legislation and its regulations provide for the reimbursement to states of funds spent on cash and medical assistance given to refugees during their first 36 months in the United States. States also have responsibility for coordinating and administering the delivery of certain social services (English language training programs, employment services, translator and interpreter services, health-related services, etc.) with the Federal government providing up to 100 percent reimbursement for these as well.

In order to qualify for Federal reimbursement, states are required to follow certain procedures. Program plans must be filed annually by states with the Office of Refugee Resettlement. The plans must contain at least:

- A description of how the state intends to encourage effective refugee resettlement and to promote economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible:

- A description of how the state will ensure that language and employment services are made available to refugees receiving cash assistance;

- Plans for designation of an individual employed by the state who will be responsible for ensuring coordination of public and private resources in refugee resettlement;

- Plans for the care and supervision of unaccompanied minors in the state; and

- Plans for the identification of refugees who at the time of resettlement are determined to have medical conditions requiring, or medical histories indicating a need for, treatment or observation and such monitoring of such treatment or observation as may be necessary.

States are also required to submit annual reports on the use of funds provided under the Refugee Act.

States perform these duties in cooperation with a range of other actors. Most states have established advisory councils composed of voluntary agency personnel, refugee, local governments and other concerned with refugees. They also engage in consultations with federal agencies and national resettlement agencies about issues of common concern.

What do refugee welfare dependency rates measure?

Refugee welfare dependency rates measure the proportion of Indochines refugees eligible for federally reimbursed cash assistance who are using this program in a given month. The rates are based on the following calculation:

$$\frac{\text{\# of recipients}}{\text{\# of eligibles}} = \text{dependency rate}$$

The refugee welare dependency rate does not measure refugee self-sufficiency. Some refugees who are not receiving cash assistance are, in fact, economically self-sufficient, whereas others are dependent on non-federally-reimbursed forms of assistance and still others are unemployed and unassisted. Likewise, some refugees receiving reimbursed cash assistance are fully dependent on this form of assistance, whereas others are supplementing earned income.

What has been the refugee welfare dependency rate since 1976?

The following table shows the welfare dependency rates from 1976 to 1982, as reported by the Office of Refugee Resettlement in its Annual Report to Congress:

9/1976	29.83
8/1977	34.60
8/1978	33.07
8/1979	37.33
8/1980	45.39
6/1981	67.00 (est.)
/1982	52.00 (est.)

Do changes in dependency rates indicate changes in the effectiveness of the refugee resettlement program?

No. Recent changes in welfare dependency rates are more accurately attributable to statistical variations caused by changes in the definition of welfare eligible refugees.

What caused the seeming increase--from 1979-1981--in welfare dependence?

The seeming increase in welfare dependency was caused by two inter-related factors, both of which reflect the distributuon of refugees by their length of residence in the U.S.:

- o The Refugee Act of 1980 restricted eligibility for reimbursed assistance to refugees in the U.S. for 36 months or less, resulting in a change in the time-frames used in calculating dependency rates. (This change took effect in April, 1981.) Prior to this time, all Indochinese refugees in the U.S. since 1975 were included in the calculation. Beginning in 1981, only

refugees in the country for less than three years were included. The older arrivals were eliminated from the calculation.

- Changes in the distribution of the refugee population from greater proportions of older arrivals to greater proportions of newer arrivals contributed significantly to dependency rate increases. Large numbers of refugees arrived in 1975, fewer in 1976 to 1978, and higher numbers again in 1979 to 1981. In 1979 and 1980 the experiences of the 1975 arrivals, then here for four and five years, respectively, figured prominently in calculating dependency rates by offsetting the welfare use of the newer arrivals. In 1981, for reasons discussed above, no 1975 arrivals were counted in the eligible population; fully 100 percent of the welfare eligibles had come here within the previous three years, with 90 percent of these having arrived within the previous two years.

These factors are important because of the relationship between welfare use and duration of stay in the U.S.: the longer a refugee lives in this country, the less likely he or she is to collect welfare benefits. The change in the eligible population and the patterns of arrival meant that the 1981 dependency rate measured the dependence of those most likely to be receiving cash assistance while dropping from the calculation those least likely to be doing so.

What caused the recent decrease in the welfare dependency rate?

The seeming decrease in the welfare dependency rate that occurred between 1981 and 1982 was caused by changes in policy affecting the period of refugee eligibility for cash assistance. In 1982, eligibility for Refugee Cash Assistance /_for those not categorically eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)_/ was limited to 18 months. Prior to this time, refugees were eligible for Refugee Cash Assistance for 36 months.

The timeframe used in calculating dependency rates continued to be 36 months, however, because refugee AFDC and General Assistance use continued to be reimbursed for 36 months. Given the difficulties in determining the precise number of categorically eligible and non-categorically eligible refugees, it made sense to preserve the 36 month definition of eligible refugee. Yet, some unknown number included in the eligible population are not, in fact, eligible for assistance. Their inclusion in the calculation automatically reduces the proportion of eligible refugees who are welfare dependent.

Are refugee welfare dependency rates uniform throughout the nation?

No, these rates vary greately, depending on a variety of factors: levels of unemployment; availability of an AFDC-Unemployed Parent and/or General Assistance program within a state; benefit levels; availability of a medically-

needy program that permits employed persons to receive Medicaid; proportion of refugees within a state who are recent arrivals and others. State dependency rates range from under 10 percent in some areas to over 80 percent in others.

What are the placement policy goals of the refugee program?

Since the Displaced Persons program, the goal of U.S. placement policy for refugees has been dispersal, in order to avoid high concentrations of refugees in any specific community, thereby minimizing negative impacts. Current placement policy reads as follows:

> "the distribution and placement of refugees shall be done in a manner which will reduce further impact on certain communities and avoid creating new areas of high impact in the future."

What is the geographic distribution of refugees in the U.S.?

The most accurate statistics on the geographic distribution of refugees pertain to Southeast Asians. Roughly 70 percent of all Indochinese refugees currently reside in 10 states, with about one-third living in California.

How does this distributuon compare with that of other populations?

The following table shows the proportion of Indochinese refugees, legal immigrants and the overall U.S. population in U.S. states:

Rank Ordering of States by Number of Persons	U.S. Population	Indochinese Refugees	Immigrants
10 Most Populous	53.8%	69.9%	80.6%
11th-20th	21.6%	15.5%	11.2%
21st-30th	14.1%	9.0%	4.9%
31st-40th	7.3%	4.3%	1.0%
41st-51st*	3.3%	1.3%	1.0%

*State rankings include District of Columbia.

As the chart indicates, refugees are more concentrated than the U.S. populations, but they are less concentrated than immigrants who, by and large, choose for themselves where they will reside in the United States.

What issues are raised by this comparison?

The fact that 70 percent of Indochinese refugees are located in 10 states has been used to indicate high concentrations, when seen in absolute terms, yet it can also be used to show substantial dispersal, when seen in comparison to immigration. In either case, the pattern of geographic distribution raises questions about the relationship between refugee numbers in a given location and the impact of the refugee program on receiving communities and refugee achievement of self-sufficiency. Among the questions to be answered regarding placement policy are the following: Are there circumstances under which

refugee concentrations should be encouraged, as a matter of public policy? To what extent should/should not immigrant patterns (i.e., self-placements, high concentration and a largely successful record of economic achievement in the U.S.) serve as models for the refugee program? What is the relationship between placement strategies and the impact of refugees on receiving communities? Are the negative effects of refugees in areas with high concentrations greater or lesser than the effects of refugees in areas with smaller numbers? What factors should be taken into account in determining the placement of refugees in a particular location?

What have been the federal refugee program costs for resettling refugees in the United States?

The federal refugee program costs obligated in FY1981 and FY1982 were as follows:

	FY1981	FY1982
Refugee Admissions, including reception and placement, processing and transportation	$204,522,000	$146,097,000
Domestic Assistance, including cash and medical assistance, social services, matching grants, etc.	$608,232,000	$642,788,000

In addition to these costs were ones incurred by other federal agencies on behalf of refugees, e.g., the normal federal share of AFDC and Medicaid and Food Stamps.

Expected expenditures in FY1983 and FY1984 are substantially lower than previous costs. For the domestic assistance program, for example, the FY1983 continuing resolution appropriation is $578,500,000 and the proposed FY1984 appropriation is $485 million. The FY1983 appropriation, in fact, showed an increase over administration requests, with most of the additional funds earmarked for social services and targeted assistance programs for areas with negative impacts.

The decrease in the size of the refugee budget is attributable to three major factors: a decrease in the number of new arrivals; a reduction in the period of special eligibility for cash and medical assistance (from 36 months to 18 months); and improvements in the administration and operation of the program /_ That reductions in cost are attributable to factors other than declining admissions rates can be seen in a comparison of per-capita costs. In FY1981, the per-capita costs of ORR-funded cash and medical assistance were $1111 (adjusted to take into account changing provisions regarding the period of eligibility for assistance); in FY1982, the costs were $1050 per refugee; and in FY1983, they are estimated at $950 per refugee. (These data were calculated by RPG using information contained in ORR Annual Reports to Congress.)_/